

6 Ways a Dad Can Develop True Grit in His Child

Most of us are familiar with the 2010 Coen brothers' western, *True Grit*. The movie is a remake of John Wayne's 1969 adaptation of the novel by Charles Portis, telling the true story of 14-year-old Mattie Ross and her determination to find her father's killer.

True grit, according to most dictionaries, means the ability to show toughness in the face of trouble or difficulty. It's a character trait that involves qualities such as "backbone," boldness, bravery, constancy, courage, dauntlessness, determination, endurance, fearlessness, gutsiness, heart, mettle, moxie, nerve, patience, perseverance, pluck, resolution, "spine," spirit, spunk, stamina, staying power, stick-to-it-iveness, stoutheartedness, tenacity, valor, and the ever elusive "what it takes."

Regardless of how you slice it, true grit is a quality All Pro Dads would love to see their children develop. The challenge, of course, is how can a dad develop true grit in his child without having to go through the kind of trauma Mattie Ross ran across in the mid-19th century frontier?

Here, then, are six ideas to help All Pro Dads develop true grit in their children:

1. Ease off on the handholding. You know what we mean. Allow your child to fail once in a while. Allow your child to succeed by his or her own efforts. Allow your child to complete difficult tasks without you stepping in to tidy them up and make them look better.

2. Cultivate a problem-solving culture at home. How about a few research assignments without Google? Maybe make pancakes without the "instant"! A series of difficult but achievable

chores over the summer? Or a regular “kids’ night” for dinner prep responsibilities. Be realistic, but don’t be afraid of a challenge or two.

3. Help your child clarify, and then express, foundational values. Character education must be an ongoing priority at home. Teach your child to understand what they believe, to value what they believe and then to practice the art of explaining it.

4. Sign up to learn a difficult task—together. Check with your local YMCA or community college and sign up—with your child—for a class you know will be a challenge but something they can use. Bicycle repair, gardening, how to change the oil—don’t just talk about true grit; use some together.

5. Participate in a mission or service venture outside your personal comfort zone. Most real learning takes place in the face of at least a measure of difficulty. So get involved in a service project—together—that’s guaranteed to take you both outside your comfort zone.

6. Teach the faith. Jesus may have been the first to identify the essence of true grit when He said the following: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33, NIV). Some translations use the words *courage* or *confidence* in place of *heart*. We believe faith education is a key element in developing the character necessary to sustain true grit, no matter what your age.

All Pro Dad is Family First’s innovative and unique program for every father. Their aim is to interlock the hearts of the fathers with their children and, as a byproduct, the hearts of the children with their dads. At , dads in any stage of fatherhood can find helpful resources to aid in their parenting. Resources include daily emails, blogs, Top 10 lists, articles, printable tools, videos and eBooks. From , fathers can join the highly engaged All Pro Dad social media

communities on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **YouTube** and **Instagram**.